

Executive Summary

The District of Columbia is unique in so many ways. It is the nation's capital and the only totally urban jurisdiction in the country required by federal law to manage its fisheries and wildlife resources. Management of fisheries and wildlife resources is usually a state function. However, not being part of another state, the District must function as a state in this regard. In the District government the Fisheries and Wildlife Division is the responsible entity for managing wildlife.

The mission of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division is to determine the status of the fisheries and wildlife resources found within the District, ascertain how they interact, and actively manage the resources so that they can endure, through protection, conservation and education. The vision of the Division is to fully maximize the functioning of the aquatic ecosystems within the District through adaptive management based on sound research. The Division works to understand the interrelationships of the local wildlife in an urban environment and its relationship to humans. These resources consist of both resident species, organisms that complete their life cycles within the District, and migratory species, which spend only a part of their life within the District's jurisdiction.

The DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division takes great pride in the fact that it is one of the 56 jurisdictions required to complete a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). The Division definitely sees itself as the new kid on the block in the area of wildlife management, only formally managing the District's wildlife resources for about five years. We know we have much to learn regarding wildlife management and how to apply it to a small land area that's predominantly urban.

It has been only through the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program that the District has been able to even begin to implement a comprehensive survey for wildlife. Using SWG Program funds appropriated to the District, the Division is now in the fourth year of a citywide bird survey that includes both the resident and migratory species. The SWG Program has also enabled the Division to implement the first-ever comprehensive citywide survey of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates.

Through the development of the District's CWCS document, the Fisheries and Wildlife Division has gathered a wealth of information about the District's wildlife resources. Although we have learned a lot about the wildlife in the District, it is very clear that there is so much more we need to learn. While the District is a very small geographic area, only 69 square miles, a tremendous amount of preliminary information that tells us that the District is home to over 500 species of birds, fish, manual, reptiles and amphibians. Furthermore, it is too early to even estimate a number for invertebrates, for which we have only scratched the surface on what we believe to be in the thousands. While all of these species of wildlife in the District need some degree of conservation, for the purpose of this CWCS, we have focused on those of greatest conservation need.